

Pistols and Powder Testers of the American Revolution

Valley Forge National Historical Park



Pistols

Pistols were heavily relied on during the American Revolutionary War by cavalry and high ranking officers. A pair of pistols were carried in leather holsters known as buckets, hung on either side of a horse in front of the saddle. Pistols were used primarily for close range combat and self defense.

English Queen Anne Pistol



- c. 1765-1780
- Screw-Barrel loading system
- Popular silver wire inlay on wooden stock

English Officer's Holster Pistol



- c. 1750-1770
- Lock engraved "Wilson"
- Barrel engraved "Wilson*London"

French Officer's Holster Pistol



- c. 1750-1770
- Recessed carving on stock
- Octagon barrel at breech rounded towards muzzle with gold wash

French Officer's Holster Pistol



- c. 1750-1770
- Face design on butt plate
- Lock plate engraved with "Thonus/Aliege"



French Officer's Pistol



- c. 1750-1770
- Barrel etched with Floral and gold wash
- Engraved on lock plate "C. Laude/Berardy"

English Sea Service Pistol

VAFO 00005285
04/29/2008



VAFO 00005285
04/29/2008



VAFO 00005285
04/29/2008



- c. 1750
- Barrel engraved "Bedfordshire-Horse Artillery"
- Lock plate stamped "Tower"

Powder Testers

It was important to test black powder before purchase, if too weak the flintlock weapon would not fire correctly, potentially leaving a soldier or officer vulnerable. Too strong, it could cause the weapon to explode, fatally wounding the one it was meant to protect.

The mechanism works the same as a flintlock pistol or musket. When fired the hammer drops causing a spark to ignite the powder. The firing forces the wheel to turn, registering the strength of the powder.

Powder Tester



- Engraved "Tomas Be/1703"
- Numbered 1-7 to measure powder strength
- Turned wood handle

Powder Tester



- c. 1710-1720
- Numbered 1-8 to measure powder strength
- “Queen Anne” style



Powder Tester



- English pistol style
- Marked "Twigg/London"
- Numbered 1-7 to measure powder strength



Powder Tester



- German style
- Marked "C.Sturm and H.Suhl"
- Numbered 1-20 to measure powder strength

Tinder Pistol

VAFO 00001549
04/28/2008



- Stamped "Woolley"
- Small tinder storage compartment
- Iron candle holder on left side

VAFO 00001549
04/28/2008



Tinder Pistol

VAFO 00001550
04/28/2008



- Sitting dog engraved on handle
- Tinder storage compartment
- "U" shape stand mounted to front

VAFO 00001550
04/28/2008



For More Information

Contact:
The Museum Staff
Valley Forge National Historical Park
1400 North Outer Line Drive
King of Prussia, PA 19426

610-783-1034

or

<http://www.nps.gov/vafo/contacts.htm>

